Women and Men in Mennonite Ministry Survey Results

June, 2007

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The 2005 Survey of Women and Men in Ministry was administered under the direction of Diane Zaerr Brenneman, Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA, and in partnership with Mennonite Church Canada. Administration and analysis of this survey was made possible through funding from the Pathways to Mission and Vocation program with generous support from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., and financial support from Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Surveys were completed and returned by 169 women (75% US, 25% Canadian) and 129 men (73% US, 27% Canadian). Persons of color were not well represented in the sample and thus these results may unfortunately fail to speak to the experiences of persons of color who are in ministry. More male respondents in the current sample served in congregational ministry roles than did female respondents, while a higher proportion of women were serving as chaplains than were men. The majority of both the men and women respondents had attended seminary, although this was true of more women than men. (*See pp. 9-11)*

II. The survey results include good news regarding the job satisfaction experienced by both male and female pastors within the Mennonite church. The majority of both men and women who responded to the survey reported that they are satisfied with their pastoral role and feel a sense of accomplishment in their work. The majority of survey respondents also reported that they almost never have experienced burnout or have thought seriously about leaving the pastoral ministry for some other kind of work. (*See p. 11)*

III. There are many indicators of continuing improvement in the climate for women in leadership.

- Women pastors report high levels of job satisfaction, and there has been an increase in job satisfaction among women since the 1992 survey. (*See p. 11)*
- The majority of women pastors who seek out second placements find them relatively quickly. (*See p. 13)*
- The vast majority of women clergy feel accepted, liked, and appreciated by most members of their congregation. There are no gender differences in this regard. (*See p. 14)*
- There has been a slight increase in the proportion of women serving as co-pastors with their spouse who describe their role as equal or superordinate to their spouses. (*See pp. 33- 34)*

IV. Despite these steps forward, women who are interested in pursuing a career in the ministry continue to face obstacles as a result of their gender.

- Acceptance of women is sometimes limited to certain positions whereas other positions (e.g., lead pastor or conference leadership positions) are not available to them. For example, some women are in associate roles less due to their own choice and instead because this role was what was available. In addition, the majority of women serving as co-pastors with their spouse report that the congregation would not have called them if not for their spouse, and a small number still are prohibited from performing certain tasks, most often preaching. (*See pp. 30-34)*

- Women are more likely to describe external influences (e.g., uncertainty about being accepted by a church or family resistance) as source of their doubts, often (although not always) explicitly related to being a woman. In contrast, males were more likely than women to report no doubts, doubts related to financial concerns and doubts related to doctrinal issues (e.g., uncertainty if one's liberal perspectives or charismatic perspectives would be acceptable) (*See pp. 37-40)*

- Although female pastoral candidates are no more likely than men to encounter congregational strife around their calling, more people actually leave the church as a result of conflict over a woman being called into ministry than because of conflict related to male candidates, suggesting that conflicts regarding women's calls may be more intractable, at least for a small proportion of church members. (*See p. 14)*

- A small number of male pastors express a significant amount of criticism toward their female colleagues. Even more men seem negative or ambivalent about working under the leadership of a woman. *(See pp. 14-17)*

- Women are more likely than men to experience sexual harassment, both in general and from members of their congregations. *(See p. 29)*

V. Although gender inequalities were still listed as one of the three primary concerns facing women, women in ministry do not seem mired in a focus on a need for acceptance from others regarding the validity of their call, but instead are moving forward finding ways to offer their gifts to the church.

- Women were concerned primarily with structural problems which limit women rather than with individual attitudes. *(See pp. 12 ff)*

- Women report a growing emphasis on the desire to develop their own genderappropriate leadership styles and approaches to ministry. *(See pp. 20 ff)*

- Women are concerned with finding ways to respond redemptively to critics. (*See pp 17-18*)

VI. Women respondents identified a desire that the church (and conference leadership) continue to address the issue of women in leadership. As one respondent wrote: *"I think one challenge is the fact that we think the issue of women in ministry has been dealt with and solved- or that may be the attitude among the younger generation- and therefore we don't work at the ways in which there are pockets of resistance."* The majority of pastors see conference ministers as supportive of women in ministry, but there are some voices calling for conferences to do more. (*See pp. 14-15)*

VII. Congregational conflict regarding the calling of a new pastor is a relatively common experience for both male and female pastoral candidates. *(See p. 14)*

VIII. The most frequently given explanations for positive feelings and attitudes toward women in ministry among male respondents were positive personal experiences with women ministers and recognition of the giftedness which women bring to the pastorate. A sizable number of male respondents also listed theological or Biblical reasons for support of their female colleagues. A number of those with negative viewpoints failed to provide much rationale for their attitudes. There is a tendency for those who have negative feelings toward women in ministry to have less contact with women than those with more positive feelings. *(See pp. 15-17)*

IX. Attendance at seminary was associated with reports of more positive attitudes among male respondents towards women in ministry. Age, country of citizenship, and country of service were not associated with differing attitudes toward women ministers. *(See p. 17)*

X. Both men and women seem to struggle with identifying and developing appropriate models of leadership and ministry styles. There appear to be many differing viewpoints within the church about what the right models are. *(See pp. 18 ff)*

XI. The majority of both men and women describe their leadership style as one that involves an emphasis on maintaining relationships in decision making and empowerment of congregations and disavows ethical legalism. Women, however, were more likely than men to describe their ministry style as one which involves empowerment of congregations and a decision making style primarily concerned with maintaining relationships. Men were more likely to endorse a ministry style that involved an emphasis on rationality in decision making and problem solving, use of power in dealing with congregations, and ethical legalism. Seminary attendance was also associated with less ethical legalism. *(See pp. 21 ff)*

XII. The results of this study suggest that greater levels of job satisfaction were associated with a decision making style based on maintaining relationships and a ministry style involving empowerment of congregations and less clergy use of power and ethical legalism. *(See p. 24)*

XIII. Both male and female respondents expressed a desire for guidance and resources regarding the development of effective leadership/ministry styles. *(See p. 19)*

XIV. The difficulty with maintaining a balance between pastoral responsibilities, family responsibilities and personal self-care was identified as one of the top challenges faced by both men and women in ministry. Women identified this challenge in greater numbers and also were more likely than men to explicitly identify a concern with balancing work and family. *(See pp. 24-26)*

XV. The majority of married male and female respondents suggested that ministry was sometimes stressful on their marriage. The most frequently mentioned sources of this stress was the impact of the schedule of the job on the family, the emotional impact on the family, and complications in the relationships between one's spouse and the congregation.

Those co-pastoring with a spouse were more likely than those in other positions to report that the ministry has had a positive impact on their marriage. *(See pp. 27-28)*

XVI. A significant number of male respondents and a much smaller number of women suggested that setting appropriate boundaries is a challenge faced by those in ministry. Male responses tended to emphasize sexual boundaries in relating to female congregational members, whereas female respondents were more likely to mention both sexual and emotional boundaries. Men also expressed concerns about being falsely accused of violating sexual boundaries with female congregational members. (See pp. 28-29)

XVII. A number of both male and female pastors report experiences of sexual harassment, and congregational members are the most common source of that harassment for both genders. (See p. 29)

XVIII. Somewhat higher levels of satisfaction were experienced by persons serving in copastoring roles with person(s) other than a spouse as compared by those serving in associate roles. A number of female respondents, in particular, expressed an interest in working collaboratively as part of a team ministry. (See pp. 34-35)

XIX. Most men and women serving in associate roles appear to have positive relationships with the senior minister with which they serve. Although most male and the vast majority of female associates spend at least an hour weekly in discussion with the lead pastor with whom they serve, the most frequently expressed desired change was more feedback, collaboration, and communication with the senior minister. *(See pp. 32-33)*

XX. The majority of co-pastorates appear to provide settings where men and women serve together in an equal partnership, but a sizeable minority still involve a subordinate role for the female member of the couple. This inequality seems at least partially attributable to the expectations and policies of the congregations that these couples serve. (See pp. 33-34)

XXI. Approximately one-third of pastors also do paid work outside the congregation in a wide variety of positions. The majority work less than 20 hours weekly in these positions. (See p. 36)

XXII. There was a tendency for women to be older than men when they first considered a career in ministry. However, for both men and women, there was quite a range of experiences in this regard. Some women described waiting until their children were a certain age before pursuing their call to ministry. (See p. 37)

XXIII. Both men and women reported experiencing doubts about their call to ministry both before and after entering ministry. The most frequent type of doubt, experienced by both men and women pastors, was an uncertainty about an ability to perform as a pastor. This factor was also the most frequent source of doubt among those who rated their doubts as very strong. *(See pp. 38 & 41)*

XXIV. External sources of doubt and doubt resulting from observations of the church and negative experiences of other pastors tied as the second most frequently reported doubts among those who described their doubts as very strong. *(See p. 41)*

XXV. Among the youngest respondents, the sources of doubt regarding entering ministry that were most frequently articulated were observations of the church and negative experiences of other pastors. *(See p. 41)*

XXVI. Both men and women respondents see their conference ministers as quite helpful or helpful when they need help in the areas of professional/ministerial career concerns, problems with/in the congregation, or personal matters. Men are more likely than women to ask for help from their conference ministers regarding congregational problems and personal matters. *(See p. 42)*

XXVII. The following recommendations are consistent with the survey's results:

- Church leadership should continue to work at advocating for women in ministry. Particular attention needs to be given to making sure that all positions and all levels of leadership are open to women.

- Male pastors who are supportive of women in pastoral ministry should be encouraged and provided opportunities to be in dialogue with their male colleagues who are not.

- The church would benefit from further conversations about different approaches to leadership including teaming styles, associate, co, various ministry styles, etc.

- Pastors would benefit from continuing education on establishing boundaries between ministerial duties and family/private life.

- Conference ministers might want to educate both male and female pastors regarding normative experiences of those who are discerning a call and seeking a first placement. Both male and female pastors might be encouraged to learn that experiences of doubt regarding one's calling and experiences of congregational conflict are quite common. It also seems important that both conference ministers and those in ministry understand that doubts are also not uncommon later in one's ministerial career.

- The impact on single status on the call to ministry and the unique challenges faced by single pastors may be an area worth further investigation.

- Continued attention should be given to educating pastors regarding the challenges of navigating sexual and emotional boundaries with congregational members.

INTRODUCTION

Both Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada have official policies that fully affirm women for all levels of pastoral ministry. The *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* includes the following words in Article 15, the article dealing with "Ministry and Leadership": "The church calls, trains, and appoints gifted men and women to a variety of leadership ministries on its behalf. These may include such offices as pastor, deacon, and elder as well as evangelists, missionaries, teachers, conference ministers, and overseers."

But how welcoming is the Mennonite church to gifted women who are either exploring or pursuing a call to ministry? In 1992, Renee Sauder, on behalf of the then Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, took on the task of organizing and analyzing a "Women in Pastoral Ministry" Survey. In her report on the results of that survey, Renee reflected on the strong sense of inner call that many women pastors felt, but noted that that strong inner call was also accompanied by doubts and ambivalence. Renee wrote: "It is evident that women work from a base of inner strength and gumption in their call to a vocation that still holds many roadblocks for them." She reported on roadblocks reported by respondents to the survey that included congregations who were hesitant to ordain women, limitations that congregations placed on the role of women (such as not allowing them to preach), congregations who hired a pastoral couple but seemed more interested in the male spouse, and churches that experienced internal strife or loss of members because a woman had been called to serve as pastor. But the landscape was not all bleak in 1992. For example, Renee also reported high levels of satisfaction among women pastors, a vast majority of whom felt they were accepted and liked by members of their congregation and noted the changes that had occurred at seminaries (including a greater number of women on the faculties of seminaries) that had resulted in a more supportive environment for women. This survey was completed 14 years ago. How have things changed since then?

This report provides results from a 2005-2006 follow up survey to the 1992 survey. The follow-up survey was intended to accomplish two purposes: (1) assess the current status of women in Mennonite ministry as compared with the 1992 results and (2) survey a comparison group of Mennonite male pastors so that gender comparisons could be made.

Demographic Information Regarding the 2005-2006 Survey Sample

In the fall of 2005, surveys were sent to all 417 US and Canadian women pastors in the CMLT database and to a similar sized sampling of 450 male pastors. Seventy six percent of the surveys were sent to the US and twenty four percent to Canada.

Surveys were returned by 169 women (75% US, 25% Canadian) and 129 men (73% US, 27% Canadian). The response rate for the current survey was 34%, with a breakdown of 40% for women and 29% for men. The previous survey had a much higher response rate; 134 of the 186 surveys sent out (to women pastors only) were returned, yielding a response rate of 72%. Although the current response rate is much lower than the 1992 rate, it is still on the high end of what psychologists typically experience in survey research. (A response rate of 72% is almost unheard of in the psychological literature; rates ranging from 20-40% are quite typical.)

Respondents ranged in age from 23 to 92 years of age; the average age of survey respondents was 50.3 years for women and 52.6 years for men. Survey respondents were almost exclusively white (97.5% of the total sample; 97% of women and 98.3% of men). Persons of color responding to the survey included three African Americans, three persons of Asian descent, and one Hispanic American. Given their limited representation in the sample, these results may unfortunately fail to speak to the experiences of persons of color who are in ministry.[1]

The majority of both the men and women respondents had attended seminary, although this was true of more women (86.3%) than men (74.6%). Information regarding the current placements of survey respondents is given in the table below.

Position	**Women**	**Men**
Lead Pastor[2]	17.7%	45.0%
Associate	13.3	5.4
Co-pastor with spouse	13.9	3.6
Co-pastor with person other than spouse	9.5	2.7
Interim Pastor	2.5	7.2
Lay Minister	1.9	2.7
Minister/Director of Christian Ed	1.9	.9
Chaplain	12.7	2.7
Church Oversight (e.g., Conf Minister)	7.6	6.3
Seminary Professor	4.4	3.6

It is of note that more male respondents in the current sample serve in congregational ministry roles than do women, while a higher proportion of women serve as chaplains than do men. Other roles filled by a small number of survey respondents (and more women than men) include Minister/Director of Music, Deacon, Counselor, Mission/Service worker and non-church positions.

The majority of male respondents to the survey (77.5%) had served as a lead pastor at one point or another in their ministerial career; in contrast, only 34.7% of the female respondents were lead pastors either currently or in the past. The percentage of men (47.3%) and women (43.8%) who had served as associate or assistant pastors at one point or another in their career was more similar.

Among the women currently serving as a lead, associate, co-pastor or interim pastor, the average years of service was 8.9 years (with a range of 2 ½ months to 30 years) and the average number of congregations served was 1.9 (with a range of 1-9). The men had served an average of 16.4 years (range 1-39 years) and an average of 2.8 congregations (range of 0-10).

[1] Data is not available regarding how many persons of color serve in ministry in Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

[2] In this survey, the term "lead" was used to refer both to the lead pastor of a pastoral team and the sole pastor of a congregation.

THE STATE OF MENNONITE MINISTRY

Job Satisfaction

The majority of both men (77%) and women (82%) report that they are "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their pastoral role. Women's reports suggest an increase in satisfaction with their positions since the 1992 survey when only 59% reported that they were satisfied. The majority of survey respondents (61%) report that they "almost never" or "never" have experienced burnout. The job satisfaction experienced by most persons in ministry is reflected in the fact that 67% have "almost never" or "never" thought seriously about leaving the pastoral ministry for some other kind of work.

More women (52.4%) than men (35.2%) report that in the past year, they have "usually" felt like they were really accomplishing things in their ministry. However the majority of both men (95.2%) and women (93.9%) report that they have felt they were "usually" or "sometimes" really accomplishing things. Interestingly, women (6.1%) were also slightly more likely than men (4.8%) to report that they "almost never" or "never" feel a sense of accomplishment.

Greater levels of satisfaction were related to serving congregations with fewer members aged 50 or over, but were unrelated to the makeup of the congregation with regard to social class or conservative/liberal theological positions.

It appears that somewhere around six percent of pastors experience a great deal of dissatisfaction in their ministry. Six percent report that they "usually" think about leaving the pastoral ministry for some other kind of work. Four percent report that they "usually" experience burnout. Six percent of women and five percent of men "almost never" or "never" feel that they are really accomplishing things in their ministry. A larger number (10%) appear dissatisfied with their financial situation as reflected in their reports that they "almost never" or "never" have sufficient money to live comfortably.

Self-Identified Challenges Facing Women and Men in Ministry

Both male and female respondents to the survey were asked to identify what they saw as the three major challenges facing women in ministry today. Male respondents were also asked to identify the three major challenges facing men in ministry today. The top issues identified by the respondents as facing their own gender are identified in the table below.

Challenges Identified by Female Pastors	% of respondents*	Challenges Identified by Male Pastors	% of respondents*
Structural/Attitudinal Gender Inequalities	64%	Finding effective leadership/ministry styles	33%
Balancing ministry with family, other roles, self-care	57%	Setting appropriate boundaries	30%
Finding effective leadership/ministry styles	33%	Balancing ministry with family, other roles, self-care	28%

* Percentage of respondents naming the issue as one of the top three challenges

The challenge most frequently identified by women as facing women in ministry was unique to them: the structural or attitudinal gender inequalities faced by women pastors. Finding effective leadership/ministry styles was a challenge mentioned by one-third of both the women and men, making it the top challenge identified by men and the third most frequently identified challenge by women. The difficulty with balancing one's ministerial duties with other aspects of one's life, e.g., family responsibilities, personal time, etc. was the second and third most frequently identified challenge identified by women and men respectively. Setting appropriate boundaries was the second most frequently mentioned challenge by male respondents (mentioned by close to 1/3 of men). This challenge was mentioned by only 4% of the women respondents.

Challenge 1: Structural/Attitudinal Gender Inequalities

> "*Much has changed – but I think the major challenge is still in understanding that God calls women as well as men into ministry. Whether resistance comes from self or others, there's still a lot of confusion over what Paul really meant when he spoke about women and leadership."*

The most frequently identified challenge facing women in ministry was dealing with structural or attitudinal inequalities related to gender. A full two-thirds of female respondents explicitly mentioned gender inequalities as one of the three challenges that women in ministry face.[3]

Although at times, the responses of women in ministry indicated a more general concern regarding negative attitudes toward women in ministry in the church, most frequently the responses emphasized a concern about the structural or practical implications of these attitudes. For example, one respondent responded to the question about three challenges by writing: *1) Jobs! 2) Jobs! 3) Jobs! Congregations are unwilling to look at women candidates!*

Sometimes the concern was regarding the lack of openness to hiring women in certain types of roles or a "glass ceiling," as illustrated by the following responses:

> *Women are asked to be youth ministers often because churches are looking for them and women can do this and not be "lead" minister. I think it's difficult to be called to what you actually do well.*

> *We are accepted in associate or part-time positions, but it's a cause for celebration- i.e. unusual- when a woman is hired as lead pastor. The challenge is to have that become the norm.*

[3] This may actually underestimate the frequency of this concern as additional respondents voiced similar concerns without explicitly identifying the connection to gender. A few examples of this sort of response include "Getting hired initially" or "Finding churches" with no further explanation.

Unspoken barriers to women in top positions of authority

Equal access to pastoral roles and positions within leadership of MCUSA and conference level.

In addition to practical concerns about the impact of gender inequalities on the careers of women in ministry, participants also voiced concerns about the expectations and interpretations faced by women serving in pastoral positions. One woman described the "*overwhelming demands*" in this way: "*females are expected to maintain all the traditional/stereotypical roles in addition to providing leadership. (I have not yet met a male who was asked to lead a funeral service and bring 2 pies for the fellowship meal afterwards).*" Another said that one challenge faced by women in ministry is *"being interpreted as angry or grasping for more when conflict with a male pastor surfaces"* and *"not being heard and treated judiciously in such situations."*

Second and Future Placements

Women's concerns about the extent to which positions will be available to them was also evident in their answers to a survey question regarding how difficult they anticipate finding another pastoral position would be: 38.3% of women as compared to only 18.4% of men (less than 1 in 5) felt that it would be somewhat or very difficult to find another pastoral placement.

81.6% of men felt that doing so would be very easy or somewhat easy whereas this was only true for 61.6% of the women. The differences between men and women are statistically significant.

Although women are still significantly less optimistic about finding another placement as compared to men, there has been a great improvement since 1992 when only 39% of women thought that finding a new placement would be somewhat or very easy and 61% felt that it would be somewhat or very difficult. The distribution of answers by men and women in the current sample and in 1992 are given in the table below.

	Current Women	Current Men	1992 Women
Very easy	12.1	37.0	3
Somewhat easy	49.5	44.6	36
Somewhat difficult	29.0	14.1	41
Very difficult	9.3	4.3	20

Even better news is that despite these reported concerns, the majority of women who have sought out second placements have found them relatively quickly; 58% of women pastors and 41% of male pastors report that they found a second placement in less than 6 months after deciding that a move was desired. Within a year, 73% of women and 66% of men had found an adequate placement. 13% of both female and male pastors waited more than a year before they found an adequate second placement. Statistical analysis suggests that any difference between men and women with regard to the length of time they took to find a second placement may merely be due to chance. The majority of both women and men report that their second placement involves a significant increase in responsibilities (82.8% of women and 72% of men); there is no statistical difference between men and women in this regard.

Congregational Acceptance

Twelve years ago, 19% of women reported that the church experienced internal strife because they were called into ministry. A somewhat smaller, but still relatively similar percentage (16.7%) indicated the same in the current survey. Surprisingly, the percentage of men who reported the church experiencing internal strife was slightly larger (20.8%) although not significantly so. The survey did not explicitly ask respondents to describe the nature of this internal strife and so the exact nature of the congregational conflict is not clear for either the male or female respondents. It might be useful for pastoral candidates to understand that it is not at all uncommon for congregations to experience conflict surrounding pastoral transitions.

In the current sample, 13.7 % of the women reported that people left the church as a result of their being called into ministry (compared to 11% in 1992). Only 4.9% of men in the current survey reported people leaving the church; this is significantly smaller than the percentage reported by women. The fact that more people leave the church as a result of women being called into ministry suggests that although church conflict may be encountered by both men and women during their calling process, conflicts regarding women's calls may be more intractable, at least for a small proportion of church members.

It should be noted that one complication with the above analysis is that these survey questions asked about people's first placements and so likely included some of the same experiences described in the 1992 results. In other words, they are not necessarily indicative of *current* experiences alone.

In contrast to these early experiences of negative responses from some in the congregation, the vast majority (92%) of both men and women indicated that they "usually" felt accepted, liked, and appreciated by most members of their congregation.

Support/Advocacy by Conference Ministers and other Church Leaders

Both male and female respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their current conference minister is advocating for placing more women in the openings in their conference. In response, 64.7% of women and 65.1% of men feel that their conference ministers are doing "a great deal" in this area. 11.8% of women and 15.6% of men reported that their conference ministers were doing "very little" or were "not at all" doing this sort of advocacy. Significance tests indicate that men and women do not differ in their opinions in this area.

It should be noted that despite the sense of the majority of pastors that conference ministers are helpful allies to women in ministry, there are some passionate minority voices that are calling for conference ministers to do more. For example, in their responses to an openended question regarding challenges women in ministry face, a few respondents voiced frustration with their sense that there is inadequate advocacy from church leadership. For example, one woman wrote: "*It takes more than empathy. They need to look at how to bring about change. Dialogue, communication is needed."*

In addition to voicing a desire for more support by conference leadership, participants also identified several other potential allies in advocating for women as illustrated in the following responses:

There needs to be more female profs/faculty etc at institutions which nurture pastors.

What are our seminaries teaching in the classrooms? What are pastors, SS teachers teaching our young people? 'Women in leadership' needs to be addressed, studied according to Jesus' teaching.

Attitudes of male pastors toward women in ministry

From survey responses, it was evident that women longed for allies among their male colleagues in pastoral ministry and grieved when this support was not forthcoming. Male pastors who responded to the survey were asked to rate their "attitudes, beliefs or feelings toward women in pastoral ministry" on a 5 point Likert scale with the anchors of 1 "very positive," 3 "neutral," and 5 "very negative." The majority of respondents (60.5%) indicated "very positive" feelings toward women in pastoral ministry, with a total of 74.8% of the respondents at the positive end of the continuum. The most frequently given explanations for these positive feelings and attitudes were personal experiences with women in ministry and recognition of the giftedness which women bring to the pastorate. The following are some examples of these sorts of responses:

I have been ministered to in profound ways by women in ministry.

... Women pastors that I've met and know are more intuitive, compassionate, open to new ideas, and carry a quiet strength that most male pastors I've met do not. These things make for a very positive attitude on my part toward women leaders.

Many women have ministered to me over the years with wisdom and grace.

I've worked effectively with many strong female lay leaders and some female associates. I believe God's call is not gender based. Many of the female pastors I've known and worked with in seminary and Ontario were at least as capable and effective as the male pastors- usually better!

Women have wonderful pastoral skills. We need more of them.

A sizable number of participants also listed theological or Biblical reasons for their positions on this issue. Some illustrative responses include:

Any other position falls short of valuing/applying/understanding the victory of Christ.

Acts 2 – Spirit on men and women.

God used women in leadership and ministry in both Old and New Testaments. God still uses women in ministry.

A number of male pastors seem strongly committed to advocating for women in ministry. In their responses to the survey question regarding challenges facing men in ministry, 13% of male respondents saw advocating for and supporting females in ministry as among the top three challenges. For example, one male respondent wrote that men face the challenge of "*accepting the Biblical call to equality with women and advocating for women's equality in the pulpit! Letting go of male hegemony in the pulpit!"* Another noted the need for male pastors to be "*working with those in the congregation who hold to the notion that only men can be called to pastoral leadership."* Yet another respondent suggested that male ministers should *"recognize the complementary benefits of cross-gender pastoral work*"

A neutral rating toward women in ministry was given by 16.8% of male respondents. Those who provided a neutral rating did so for very divergent reasons. Some of these persons suggested that gender was now a non-issue, for example, "*It is not about gender, it is about calling and giftedness."* Others reported a mix of positive and negative attitudes or experiences or positive attitudes toward women in ministry if the positions that they are allowed to fill are limited.

Some are better preachers than men. Generally they are more in tune with feelings.

Some have an axe to grind – push women pastors.

I support women in ministry. However, I do not believe that women are to serve as lead pastors. A role as co-pastor or associate pastor is fine. Men have been set in place by God to be the spiritual leaders in the home and this is the standard for the church as well.

I am not personally opposed, but the people of our conference are not ready to accept a woman pastor. Many are strongly opposed

Only 10 of the 118 male pastors who responded to the survey (or 8%) provided negative ratings, with half of these choosing the "very negative" rating. A few of these respondents provided some explanation of the rationale or experiences that shaped their opinions about these issues. For example, one respondent wrote: "*Simply put- they will never rise above a certain level of criticism because it is contrary to God's created order. History and contemporary experience reveals congregations with women pastors eventually wind up with women, children. (i.e. Methodists!)* Others didn't provide much explanation for the reasons behind their beliefs as illustrated by the following responses:

It's a misfit. Out of the 99 things women do very well, why there is pressure to pursue the one thing God has reserved for men is beyond me…

[The] need for women in ministry is real; but represents a failure of men to take serving/leading roles

In summary, it appears that women pastors have many supporters among their male colleagues, but also face opposition by a small minority.

Attendance at seminary was associated with reports of more positive attitudes among male respondents towards women in ministry. Age, country of citizenship, and country of service were not associated with differing attitudes toward women ministers.

Despite the fact that a majority of male pastors express acceptance of women in ministry among male respondents, there was some indication of reluctance among some males (even those who supported women in ministry in a general way) to serve in a subordinate role to a woman leader. Males who had at one point in their career served in an associate pastor role were asked to indicate how knowing that the lead pastor was a woman would affect their attitude toward an offer of an associate pastor position. The majority of respondents (63.3%) indicated that this knowledge would not affect their attitude toward the position one way or another. One in four of the respondents however indicated that this knowledge would make the position either somewhat (16.7%) or significantly (8.3%) less attractive. Only 11.7% of respondents indicated that knowing the lead pastor was a woman would make the position somewhat or significantly *more* attractive.

It should also be noted that a reasonably large minority of male pastors report somewhat limited contact with women pastors. Thirty two percent of male respondents have no female clergy with whom they talk regularly (at least once/month), and close to one in four men (23%) have never been part of a support/study group that included women pastors. There is a tendency for those who have negative feelings toward women in ministry to have less contact with women than those with more positive feelings. Of those who have negative feelings about women in ministry, 70% are not in support/study groups with women pastors and lack any regular contact with women ministers. In contrast, 80% of those with more positive feelings have regular contact with women ministers.

Some women in ministry (5%) named this lack of support from male colleagues as one of the top challenges facing women in ministry. For example, one woman described this challenge as "*Lack of conversation with male pastors who aren't enlightened on our plight"* and another as "*Lack of full acceptance by male church leaders*."

Responding to Critics of Women in Ministry

Over one in ten women (11%) identified the challenge that women ministers face in dealing with (and often ministering to) those who believe that women should not be serving as pastors. Women may benefit from a dialogue with one another as they attempt to navigate the best balance between maintaining principles and maintaining relationships. Examples of the voices of women reflecting on the most appropriate response to critics are illustrated in the quotes below:

Continuing to love and bless the dear folks who mistrust or even negate our gifts and calling; being so grounded and at peace in God that we are able to not be hurt or slapped by them or sucked into pointless arguing.

Open hearts to all people –even to those who don't feel women should be ministers.

Keeping our faith amidst persecution, we must keep our eyes on Jesus and remember whom we serve.

Walking the tight ropes of leading but at the same time, allowing males (and sometime other females) time to adjust to the idea that God has given gifts for ministry to both genders.

To walk the balance of embracing the call to ministry and to honor the process of many local churches which often do not embrace women in ministry

The inability to intelligently, thoughtfully and compassionately answer (respond to) the questions raised by traditional understandings of passages of scripture referring to women's roles and positions

Keeping the "main thing the main thing"; remembering it's not about how many women are doing what (or not doing) in the church; but about seeking and expanding the kingdom of God (within ourselves and beyond). While the ministry issue is important, too much attention to it makes it seem like women just have a chip on their shoulders (some do!) while ministering the love of Christ gradually breaks down walls.

Challenge 2: Finding Appropriate Leadership and Ministry Styles

The need to develop healthy and effective styles of leadership was the most common response given by males when asked to describe the challenges that face men in ministry; this response was given by 33% of men. A similar percentage of women identified this same challenge as one that women in ministry face, making it the third most frequently identified challenge among women respondents.[4] Responses included a diversity of viewpoints regarding what type of style is most appropriate, as is evident in the following sample of responses:

To be nurturing as well as able to make and carry out difficult "executive" decisions and still be seen as "okay" and not ruthless (Female respondent)

Choosing a leadership style that fits believer's church theology. Too likely to choose protestant CEO model (Male respondent)

[4] The same proportion of men identified this challenge as a challenge facing male pastors and in fact, it was the most frequently reported challenge among men. It should also be noted that a handful of respondents expressed their sense that church leadership has not been clear regarding the appropriate leadership for clergy and seemed to have the sense that this sort of guidance would be helpful to pastors.

That as we help correct the loss of the feminine that we continue to find ways for worship to be meaningful to both genders (male and female) (Female respondent

There seems to be a demand for the style of preaching that emulates the style of TV evangelists. I think all pastors, male and female alike, need to remember that a move to a less formal style of preaching is good only when such a style does not compromise the message itself. (Male respondent)

A willingness to own ministry as a calling from God; Willingness to be a prophet proclaiming God's word uncompromised (Male respondent)

Ability to establish a proper authority balance between themselves and congregation (Male respondent)

Changing approach to ministry with those disenchanted with the institutional church, to lure them back (Female respondent)

Respondents described this as a time of change where we must struggle with the tension resulting from differing ideas about appropriate ministry. One female respondent wrote: "*The institutional church (of every denomination) is in a time of tremendous change and models of ministry are changing just as more women are trained in the past models."* Another wrote "*I think the leadership style wanted by Mennonite congregations are changing and may not suit women as well as it has in the recent past*."

Both men and women seemed to struggle with contradictory messages about what a minister should look like. For example, one woman wrote that she found it challenging "*to sort out and take with a grain of salt all the official messages about what leaders 'should' look and act like*." A number of male respondents expressed a wish for more clarity and guidance from church leadership regarding appropriate styles of ministry. One man wrote "*MC USA is not clear on the leadership role for clergy"* and another wrote that there is a "*lack of clarity of pastoral role [for] both men and women."* Others also expressed a desire for more resources to be provided in this area. One woman bemoaned the challenge of "*finding resources on church leadership that are written with women's styles of leadership in mind.*" Another expressed a desire for "*resources for building on ministry strength and exploring new ways of leading the church."* A male respondent suggested that there are *"not enough models of positive, strong, yet collaborative leaders."*

A number of voices seemed to want to find balance among differing approaches, as illustrated in the following responses:

Claiming authority in ministry while at the same time shifting the model of ministry to be more inclusive of lay people (Female respondent)

Providing visionary leadership without becoming autocratic (Male respondent)

The ability to hold firmly to scriptural principles and knowing how to apply them in various cultural contexts while at the same time maintaining strong relationships (Female respondent)

To pick your way along the journey being pastoral and prophetic (caring and pushy!) (Female respondent)

Balancing service and leadership models. (Male respondent)

Gender and Leadership/Ministry Styles

The vast majority of the responses of females in ministry articulated a desire for women to develop their own gender-appropriate styles of ministry, as illustrated in the following quotes.

Courageously exploring and articulating distinctly female styles of leadership ...ways of leading that perhaps are not seen in the male world as effective or "smart." I think this kind of thought and exploration of leadership styles would help women thinking about entering ministry to have a variety of models and styles to see and experience and explore.

Allowing ourselves to minister out of our own gifts and calling without resorting to imitating the gifts and calling of men- recognizing, allowing, and even celebrating the differences in style, direction, focus of ministry. We are not competing in a "man's world", we are following God.

To serve with authenticity and integrity out of who she is rather than what she – as a "woman pastor". To accept diversity and variety among women pastors!

Female respondents voiced hopes that women in ministry would have the opportunity to develop their own voices and find a space where they might "*find…the appropriate way to function –not follow the male/hierarchical model and not doing everything in reaction to it—finding a way to be one's self"* and "*sort… through all the expectations, roles, styles and models of pastoral ministry to determine what is the best for a given time and place, which also matches one's gifts and calling."*

A smaller number of women voiced their concern that women not feel constrained to limitations of "feminine" gender socialization and focus on only those tasks/approaches that are gender appropriate as illustrated by the following responses:

I believe that women pastors should not have as their primary lens being a woman. This means they should not view every possible issue and situation in a church as something that needs to be viewed through the lens of a woman. I have observed this and what happens is that the women become whiny, critical and cynical – very un-Christ like. The

primary lens thru which to do ministry is how to be Christ-like. So…women must be on their guard not to be obsessed with the women in ministry issue.

[Women pastors should avoid the] temptation to "specialize" in the more traditionally feminine aspects of ministry, even when these are not the only areas of gifting.

A few male respondents also suggested the influence that gender may have on one's leadership style. For example, one man wrote "*With the move toward equalizing of power between male and female pastors, the male pastor faces the challenge of finding his masculine identity in ministry, and of finding healthy faithful ways to use his power."*

Gender Differences

The current survey included two items from the 1992 survey regarding ministry style and a number of items drawn from a survey of women and men in 1993 conducted by Edward C. Lehman, Jr[5]. Lehman (1993) reported differences between men and women in items measuring four different areas: use of power, empowerment of congregations, rational problem solving and ethical legalism. Survey respondents often included similar themes in their descriptions of the challenges that ministers face with regard to finding effective leadership/ministry styles.

Visionary vs. maintainer. The first of the items taken from the 1992 survey and included in the current survey asked respondents to rate their leadership style on a ten-point scale with the endpoints of the scale being labeled "visionary" ("I enjoy envisioning future goals for the congregation/dreaming about new possibilities") and "maintainer" ("I enjoy carrying out already established goals. There were no gender differences in responses to this question among current respondents; both males and females averaged 4.1 on this question (an answer toward the "visionary" end of the scale).[6]

Principle vs. relationship. The second item asked respondents to indicate their preferred decision making style on a ten-point scale with the scale endpoints being "maintaining the principle" ("I make decisions based on the principle of the issue at hand") and "maintaining the relationship" ("I make decisions based on the desire to maintain harmony in the relationship.") The majority of both women and men gave answers toward the maintaining relationships end of the scale; however the average for women was more strongly toward this end of the continuum than it was for men (Women average=6.3; Men average=5.5). A few of the male respondents to the survey identified this area [e.g., "*balancing relationship with theology"* and "*living in the tension between grace and truth (compassion and doctrine)"]* in response to the open ended survey question regarding challenges facing male pastors.

Use of Clergy Power vs. Empowerment of Congregations. In Lehman's sample, men were more likely than women to identify with items measuring the use of power in dealing with their congregations, such as "Sometimes I have to drag my congregation kicking and screaming in the direction I think the church ought to go" and "I don't think congregations can function

[5] Lehman, E.C. (1993). *Gender and Work: The Case of the Clergy*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

[6] The average response given by respondents in 1992 was 4.4

very well without guidance from the clergy."[7] This same pattern was found among the current respondents. On a scale ranging from 0 ("not like me at all") to 5 ("very much like me"), the average female score on the use of power scale was 1.5 whereas the male average was 1.9. This difference between men and women is small, but is unlikely to be due merely to chance.

Lehman found that in contrast, women were more likely than men to identify with items measuring a leadership style which works at empowering congregations. Examples of these items include the following: "I believe that lay people, not the clergy, should decide the direction in which the church will go" and "a collaborative leadership style works best for me in working with the congregation."[8] Women pastors in the current sample also were more likely to endorse this ministry style, with an average of 3.8 compared to the male average of 3.6, again a small but likely reliable difference between the genders.

In their responses to the open-ended survey question regarding challenges facing male or female pastors, a significant number of both men and women articulated a sense that pastors need to develop models of the appropriate use of power. Both male and female respondents to the survey raised questions or concerns about the roles of clergy and lay leadership. One female respondent wrote: "*I'm sorry that this survey uses the "clergy- lay" language- I know it is easier to do that than find other terms, but it is important in my understanding of Mennonite theology of leadership that we encourage strong leadership without the clergy/lay gap."* A number of voices raised concerns about the continuing move toward professionalism of the pastorate, and one male respondent questioned whether the pastor role is really necessary.

Respondents also expressed a desire for lay leaders to be involved in the church. For example, one male respondent bemoaned "*the idea that lay leadership in a congregation means supervision of the pastor"* and another said that pastors are faced with the challenge "*to train members to do ministry rather than doing ministry for the members; e.g., training members to use their spiritual gifts- training members to do mutual care."* One woman respondent noted that one challenge she believed women in ministry faced was "*preparation of a congregation to accept non hierarchical leadership."*

In contrast, there were also voices (predominantly male) calling for greater authority to be given to pastors. One male respondent suggested that one challenge male pastors face is *"being seen as the leader but not being given the authority to lead (truly lead)."* Another described the challenge as "*Consensus of democratic systems of congregational government in Mennonite congregations. Pastors can't lead, but are subject to lowest common denominator,*

[7] The other three items that Lehman used to measure use of power were as follows: "I find that I must be a skilled and energetic fund raiser to prod congregational members to give enough money to keep the church alive," "When I'm really sure about what the congregation should do, I try hard to get them to take my advice," and "If I have any power in my congregation, it is based simply on the trust I have earned from the people." The latter item is reverse scored.

[8] The other two items measuring empowerment of congregation were: "One of my ministry goals is to enhance the power my members have in the mission and operation of their local congregation" and "My ministry will be most successful if I can lead my congregation to get along without me." Again, the latter item is reverse-scored.

mediocrity, congregational intransigence, opposition to change." Another bemoaned the *"lack of acceptance of pastor authority in establishing right/wrong behavior*."

Rationality in Decision-Making. Lehman also found differences between men and women in their responses to several items measuring an emphasis on rationality in decisionmaking and problem-solving in congregations. Examples of these items include the following:

"There is no substitute for rational, analytical thought for solving congregational problems"

"*I think it is more important to do the work of the church efficiently than to have a lot of people involved in it,"*

"When dealing with difficult decisions in the church, it is usually my "gut feeling" that serves me best."[9]

In Lehman's sample, men were more likely to endorse items that suggested a rational problem solving style and this finding was again replicated among the current respondents. The female average on these items was 1.8 compared to the male average of 2.2, a statistically significant difference.

As illustrated in the following responses, both men and women respondents to the survey expressed a desire to find a balance between rational and emotional approaches to problem solving and decision making:

General speaking, females are more emotional than males. Reaching balance between emotional and rational in dealing with people and issues. (female)

Modeling a third way with doing ministry- from the heart/gut rather than from the head. (male)

Ethical Legalism. Finally, men were found both in Lehman's sample and in the current sample to identify with items suggesting a legalistic approach to ethical matters such as

"*I think today's church members need to hear the correct position on ethical issues delivered from the pulpit*".

"*My primary concern in concrete moral choices is applying the best rules for conducting human life"*.

Men are less likely to identify with an item suggesting a more feminine style based on "responsible caring"

[9] The one additional item that Lehman used for this scale was "I feel uncomfortable in the absence of clear organizational guidelines for ongoing church programs."

"I often will bend church rules if they don't meet the needs of the congregation".

Among the current sample, the female average on Lehman's ethical legalism subscale was 2.4 for females and 2.9 for males, again confirming a small but significant gender difference.

Some male respondents to the survey expressed a desire to temper a ministry style based on ethical legalism. For example, one respondent suggested that male pastors face a challenge with "*living in the tension between grace and truth (compassion and doctrine*)." Other respondents seemed to mourn the "*lack of acceptance of pastoral authority in establishing right/wrong behavior*."

Summary. Lehman's findings and the findings in the current study suggest that women are more likely than men to exhibit a ministry style characterized by empowerment of congregations rather than clergy use of power and less likely to exhibit a ministry style rooted in rational problem solving and ethical legalism. It should be noted, however, that the above analysis focuses on group averages. In addition to inter group differences, there are also intra group differences in ministry style, and individual men and women may diverge from the "typical" ministry style exhibited by their gender.

Seminary attenders were also significantly less likely than non-attenders to exhibit ethical legalism with an average of 2.5, compared to an average of 3.0 for non-attenders. Seminary attendance was not associated with any other differences in ministry style on either the 1992 items or Lehman's other subscales.

Respondents who characterized their congregations as more liberal than conservative were less likely to endorse a ministry style involving clergy use of power and ethical legalism and more likely to identify with a decision making style based on maintaining relationships. Respondents who described their congregations as comprised of a smaller proportion of members who were 50 or over were more likely to endorse a rational problem solving style. Respondents who described their congregation as comprised of primarily middle or upper class members were less likely to identify with a ministry style involving ethical legalism and more likely to identify with a decision making style based on maintaining relationships.

Greater levels of job satisfaction were associated with a decision making style based on maintaining relationships and a ministry style involving empowerment of congregations and less associated with clergy use of power and ethical legalism.

Relationships among Ministry Styles

With regard to the interrelationships among these different dimensions of ministry styles, ethical legalism showed weak to moderate associations with a decision making style based on maintaining the principle (vs. maintaining the relationship)($r=.28$, $p=.00$) and with a rational problem solving style ($r=.28$, $p=.000$) and a weak correlation to clergy use of power ($r=.19$, $p=.003$).

Challenge 3: Challenges with Balancing Ministry, Family, Other Roles, and Self-Care

For those women raising (or planning to raise) children while pastoring, the challenge of learning to balance all the demands while remaining centered. The temptation to think you have to pastor perfectly is enough ...when you add "needing" to mother perfectly, it can become overwhelming. There is a seductiveness about both vocations (pastoring and mothering) that can be hard to resist. (Female respondent)

It seems men are expected to do more- especially clergy. They are expected to act a certain way, dress a certain way, talk a certain way because they are pastors/ministers/priests, etc Male pastors are people too. (Male respondent)

Keeping balance between church or work/ and home, family/congregation and the spiritual/ and the secular- losing balance can lead to despair or fanaticism. (Male respondent)

Women feel great pressure to perform in both areas. However I think women in ministry are in an excellent position to model healthy limits to pastoral work. In the past, many male pastors have been swallowed by their churches and have been unavailable to their children. I believe women pastors may have a stronger voice to advocate for healthy limits to ministry expectations. (Female respondent)

The difficulty with maintaining a balance between pastoral responsibilities, family responsibilities and personal self-care was mentioned by 57% of women who responded to the survey, thus making it the second most frequently identified challenge for women. This challenge was also identified by 28% of male respondents. It was the third most frequently identified challenge facing males in ministry. Some respondents saw this challenge as being related to the job demands of the pastorate or as one respondent described it "*ministry's fuzzier boundaries*."

Marital Status of Men and Women in Ministry

The following table reveals the marital status of male and female respondents to the current survey.

	Women	Men
Single (never married)	9%	0%
Married, living with original spouse	81	92
Widowed	1	3
Widowed and remarried	1	2
Divorced	5	0
Divorced and remarried	3	2
Separated	1	1

Most pastors who responded to the survey (85% of women and 96% of men) are currently married (either in their first marriage or following the divorce or death of a spouse). Based on the responses to this survey, it appears that the proportion of female pastors (16%) who are currently without a spouse (either never married or divorced/widowed and not remarried) is

higher than the proportion of male pastors in the same situation (4%). This difference is even more significant when one examines the marital status of only those persons currently serving as lead pastors of congregations. All male lead pastors who responded to the survey are currently married (98% in their first marriage and 2% following a divorce) as compared to 82% of the female lead pastors. It is impossible to know the cause of these gender differences based on the data available from the current survey. One possibility is that it may be easier for women without a marital partner to choose to enter the ministry (and in particular, to candidate and be accepted for a lead pastor position) than it is for men. However, further research would be needed to determine whether or not this is the case or if there is an alternative explanation for these differences.

The impact on single status on the call to ministry and the unique challenges faced by single pastors may be an area worth further investigation. For example, several single women pastors who responded to the survey discussed the difficulty with dating while serving in the pastorate; for example in her response to a question about the challenges facing women in ministry, one woman wrote:

"Dating! I'm finding dating to be a sticky issue with my profession."

It is of note that the marital status of women (whether they are never married, married, or divorced) does not appear to have a relationship with their ratings of how easy it would be for them to find another pastoral position. Because there were so few male respondents who were single, divorced or widowed, it was not possible to determine if the same would be true for men.

Balance between work and family

Despite the fact that maintaining a balance between one's ministerial responsibilities, other role responsibilities, and self-care was among the top three challenges identified by both men and women, the emphasis tended to vary depending upon gender. In addition to a higher proportion of women who identified this challenge, women were also more likely to explicitly identify the balance between work and family in their response. Close to half of female respondents (48%) included this theme in their responses. In contrast, male respondents were more likely to talk more generally about the demands of the job and the risks of burnout without explicitly identifying the impact on families or the conflicting pull of family responsibilities. The latter theme showed up in only 14% of the responses of male ministers.

A number of female respondents suggested that this challenge impacts women in ministry even more than men as illustrated in the following responses:

Traditional influences that suggest women should care for family more than their husbands do.

Emotional malnutrition because women are also primary caregivers in their families; we are too relational and give a great deal to friends as well, in addition to our congregation.

A number of women also noted that navigating the demands of the pastorate and the family is particularly difficult because a woman minister functions "without a wife".

"*Balancing roles and not having a 'wife' to do the extras*"

"*More than once I've heard myself say "I need a wife!!*"

Despite the challenge that simultaneously serving in ministry and raising a family may present, 45% of pastors report that they are "usually" able to maintain a separation between their ministerial duties and their private lives (and there were no significant gender differences in this regard). An additional 44% reported that they were "sometimes" able to do so. Still, this leaves one in ten pastors (10%) who reported that they were "almost never" or "never" able to maintain this separation.

The marital status of women is significantly related to the amount of hours that they work. The majority of single women (64%) work full time (compared to 31% of married women), whereas close to half of married women (49%) work half-time or less (compared to only 14% of single women). These comparisons were difficult to make for men since almost all male respondents to the survey were married.

Whether or not women have children is also related to whether they work full or part time. The majority of women without children (59%) work full time whereas only 31% of women with children do. In contrast, the majority of women with children (51%) work half-time or less (compared to 23% of single women). Again, these comparisons were difficult to make for men since only three of the men who responded to the survey did not have children.

Stress on marriages

On a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very stressful) to 3 (sometimes stressful) to 5 (no more stressful than another occupation), the majority of both male and female married respondents reported that the ministry was sometimes stressful on their marriage. The average rating was 3.5. There were no gender differences in this regard. In narrative explanations of their stress ratings, the themes most frequently identified by both male and female respondents were the impact of the schedule of the job on the family, the emotional impact on the family, and complications in the relationships between one's spouse and the congregation.

The impact of the schedule of a pastor on the family was mentioned by approximately one-third of both men and women (mentioned by 36% of men and 33% of women)

"*Time commitments outside of workday can be stressful*"

"*Congregational emergencies changed/influenced family plans*."

The emotional impact on the family was mentioned by 17% of both men and women. For example, one woman wrote:

"*at times I feel exhausted and distracted, preoccupied, and don't give enough attention to my marriage*"

and a male respondent wrote:

"*Working with conflicted congregations is challenging, and I don't always succeed in keeping work contained either in time or emotion. I know this disappoints my spouse*."

Complications in the relationships between one's spouse and the congregation were mentioned more frequently by men than by women (28% of men and 17% of women) although this was still the third most frequently mentioned theme by women. Examples of these sorts of responses include:

> *Most difficult for us is that my husband had a strong leadership role in the congregation before I was pastor- now that is more awkward for him and for me- to some extent he has distanced from the congregation.*
>
> *My husband attended a neighboring Mennonite church and that minimized stress on our marriage.*
>
> *Some church members were highly critical of my husband.*
>
> *[My] wife never felt comfortable with expectations and unwanted rules of being the pastor's wife in the Mennonite church*.
>
> *I am the pastor of <u>our</u> church. I could write volumes on this. Imagine a couple who had participated in group therapy together in a group led by someone else. One day a member of the couple decides to become a therapist and start a new group. Both members of the couple join the new group, even though only one is the leader/therapist. Furthermore, the therapist sees members of the group individually, making calls when needed. This is a recipe for marital disaster, yet this is the situation of so many couples where one member is involved with pastoring a local congregation and the other is not. My wife and I had to work hard at this, navigating her need to feel as much as part of the church as I do, yet respecting the trust and boundaries of the people I serve.*

Those co-pastoring with a spouse were more likely than those in other positions to volunteer in their response to this question that the ministry has had a positive impact on their marriage. For example one respondent described the impact of the ministry on her marriage in this way:

"*It has strengthened [our] marriage. We interface at so many different places*."

Challenge Four: Setting Appropriate Boundaries

Keep clear boundaries with female members in our highly charged sexual society. (Male respondent)

Finding appropriate, healthy ways to physically express warm pastoral care toward women. (Male respondent)

A major challenge as a single woman: visiting the single men of the congregation – especially those who do not attend church but are not "shut-ins." (Female respondent)

Relating properly to women in ministry situations: a. counseling- I don't do it without a woman present. b. Guidelines for male and female staff. (Male respondent)

Being careful with issues related to male power with parishioners (women) who have experienced abuse. (Male respondent)

Sexual purity. It is generally a male vulnerability. Satan desires to capitalize on that. (Male respondent)

To be alert to the blurring of emotional boundaries that sometimes complicates our collegial relationships and/or pastoral ministry. When professional roles get blurred with our own personal needs for connection, there is much potential for hurt. Women need places and people with whom to process these issues, perhaps even more than men. For men, this gets acted out sexually. For women, perhaps in competition for pastoral care roles or over-involvement in people's lives. (Female respondent)

Setting appropriate boundaries was a challenge mentioned by 30% of male respondents. A much smaller number of women (4%) mentioned concerns about boundaries as one of the top challenges facing women in ministry. As demonstrated in the responses above, male responses tended to emphasize sexual boundaries in relating to female congregational members, whereas female respondents were more likely to mention both sexual and emotional boundaries.

Close to 1 in 4 of the men who identified this issue (7% of male responses to this question) expressed a concern about being falsely accused of violating sexual boundaries with female congregational members. One male respondent wrote quite a bit about his concern in this regard:

The threat of sexual harassment. In my relationships with male pastors there is an ongoing discussion about the vulnerability male clergy face for claims of sexual harassment. There is a level of fear that even sensitive ministerial expressions can be judged by another as harassment. I, and other male clergy, have a deep sense that any claimed offense by a woman – will be a direct path out of ministry. There is not the confidence that confidentiality with conference offices or the denomination, when handling these types of cares, will lead to sensitivity in working with clergy who are being accused by a woman. The claim of sexual harassment, false or true, will alter a person's ministerial status.

Experiences of Sexual Harassment

In addition to working at not violating boundaries themselves, pastors are vulnerable to boundary violations of their parishioners. Both male and female pastors report experiences of sexual harassment, although significantly more women (17.6%)[10] did so than did men (6.3%).[11] The most common source of harassment for both men and women were congregational members; 11.2% of women and 5.6% of men have experienced some sort of sexual harassment from members of their congregations. Other sources of harassment included other pastoral staff (experienced by 2.7% of women and no men), pastoral colleagues outside the congregation (experienced by 1.4% of women and 1% of men), as well as a few experiences of harassment by community members (including those participating in ministries of the congregation), former congregational members, or church attendees. These experiences of harassment ranged from verbal harassment to unwanted and/or inappropriate touch.

The survey included a question regarding whether the 1996 sexual misconduct guidelines were helpful in handling the situation. For some, the events had occurred prior to 1996. Quite a number of the respondents indicated that they deemed the events as not serious enough for utilization of the guidelines. Instead, they dealt with the situation through setting firm boundaries (often including not being alone with the individual involved), sometimes in consultation with pastoral colleagues (often other women pastors) or congregational leaders. Most persons found the church to be helpful and supportive but there were a few exceptions. In only one case, the individual had pursued legal help in the form of a protection order, and in another case, the woman reported the person who had harassed her to the other individual's supervisor (but only after she had left her position). A number of persons indicated that they had talked about the issues in counseling.

Those who reported that they had found the guidelines helpful seemed to see them as helpful mostly in terms of clarifying what is and isn't appropriate. Two survey respondents (one man and one woman) volunteered that the guidelines had been helpful for them in helping them to understand and address their own violations of personal boundaries. A small group of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the guidelines; for example, one woman wrote:

"I was not aware of them. Though I trained for Mennonite ordination in 1997, this was not part of the training."

[10] This compares to 24% of the women respondents in 1992 who reported that they had experienced sexual harassment. As in the current survey, the most frequent source of the harassment was congregational members with pastoral colleagues outside the congregation as a close second.

[11] It should also be noted that 12% of the women and 2% of the men responding to the survey left this question blank. This may be due to the wording of the question which asked about sexual harassment in the congregation and not all survey respondents were involved in congregational ministry.

Additional Challenges facing Persons in Ministry

Challenges Identified both by Women and Men

In addition to the challenges noted above, both male and female respondents to the survey identified additional challenges which face persons in ministry including dealing with developing spiritually (identified by 16% of men and 12% of women), developing sound doctrine or theology (18% of men and 9% of women); cultural forces/challenges (named by 19% of men and 2% of women); surviving financially (14% of men and 6% of women); the need for emotional and relational skills (7% of men and 3% of women), and the need for supportive relationships (3% of men and 7% of women).

Challenges Identified by Women

In addition to the challenges noted above, women also identified additional challenges facing women in ministry included recognizing one's call and navigating experiences of doubt (identified by 15% of women respondents), the need for role models (12%), and getting men involved in the church (2%).

Challenges Identified by Men

Challenges that male pastors face in addition to those noted above include high expectations from congregation or from self (11%), weaknesses in the congregation or the church at large (8%), difficulties finding or keeping a job (5%), and problematic masculine gender roles (4%).

Different Models of Pastoral Ministry

Women and Men in Associate Pastor Positions

Of those who responded to the survey, 53% (74 women and 61 men for a total of 135 persons) indicated that they had at one point or another worked as an associate or assistant minister.

Approximately one-third of the women (32.9%) who have served in associate positions report that they decided to serve as an associate because the role was a good fit for their experience or training. For example, one woman respondent explained:

"This position was open, and I didn't want to be full-time. I also wanted to serve in a congregation before being a lead pastor, to gain experience and confidence."

Similar reasons are given by 43.5% of men who had served (or were currently serving) in an associate role.

A good number of respondents (27.6% of women and 21.0% of men) reported that they decided to serve as an associate because that was the position that was offered to them. For example, one woman wrote:

"*It was what was available as I started out"*

and a male respondent explained:

"*It was the position my church called me to."*

Nine percent of women explicitly identified gender-related reasons for serving in an associate role. Several respondents noted that they were not able to serve in a lead position because of being a woman. For others, this choice appears to have been voluntary. For example, one woman wrote:

"*I was new to ministry and this seemed like a good way to open the door for a woman*"

and another wrote:

"*I prefer men in that position."*

More women than men (23.7% of women and only 9.7% of men) said that they chose the associate role because they were not interested in serving in the lead pastor role. For some, this disinterest in the lead role was situational, for example related to having small children or being in seminary, and for others, a disinterest in the lead role was more permanent. The following quotes illustrate responses falling into this latter category:

> *My desire has never been to climb the church ladder. My call came later in life and I simply want to pastor without the stress and complications of being lead pastor.*
>
> *I do not have aspirations for serving as a lead pastor nor do I feel called to such a position. A member of a team/shared role feels comfortable to me.*
>
> *I served as an associate in my second pastorate. My first pastorate left me burned. I wanted a "safe" second chance while I fished seminary.*
>
> *Did not want lead role and responsibility while attending seminary.*

Additional reasons given for serving in associate roles included the opportunity to be mentored, a desire to work as part of a team, a preference for a part-time position, serving alongside one's spouse (a reason given by 7.9% of the women and only 1.6% of the men), the particular needs of the congregation, and a desire to work with youth, in pastoral care, or in music ministry.

A number of participants indicated that they chose to serve in an associate role because they wanted to work collaboratively as part of a team ministry. Some respondents expressed a desire for the church

"*to develop non-hierarchical models that work so that women aren't usually in associate roles."*

In summary, it appears that whereas both men and women sometimes choose associate roles for multiple reasons, some women are in associate roles less due to their own choice and instead because other roles are not available to them.

In response to a question regarding whether the congregation recognizes them as a minister in their own right, 72% of respondents indicated that they felt appreciated by the congregation. A smaller number of respondents (31%) indicated that they were seen as "subordinate" to the lead pastor. In a number of cases, this was seen as an appropriate reflection of the roles of the lead and associate pastor, availability, and degree of experience. Examples of these types of responses are given below:

> *Because my role was part-time, people clearly went to lead pastor for most concerns, but I was appropriately consulted for my area of ministry.*
>
> *Mostly, I feel they see me as a minister in my own right. Because he is full-time and I am part-time, he is more available and gets more of the calls- he has also been here a lot longer.*
>
> *I was recognized within the role I had since I was hired to do things the senior minister knew were his weak areas.*
>
> *I think my recognition as a pastor is coming but, of course my husband has much more experience.*

However, in other cases, respondents articulate the lack of recognition of their ministry that they felt from the congregation. Although true of only a minority of cases, the situation seemed to create a significant degree of grief for those it affected. For example, one woman wrote:

"*Mostly they go to the lead pastor. It's getting better but usually I'm not even referred to as pastor- or called that*"

and a woman co-pastoring with her spouse indicated that her "*husband was always seen as the 'Pastor'*."

It should also be noted that the majority of men who served as associates report expectations that they would move on to lead pastorates (74%), whereas only 44% of women experience similar expectations. [12]

Most men and women in associate roles appear to have positive relationships with the senior minister with which they serve. For example, the majority feel that the senior minister provided good suggestions about how to improve in their ministry and was rarely or never critical of their work, over protective or not willing to allow the associate to develop their own style, or threatened by the associate. Although the majority of both men and women reported

[12] In 1992, a very similar number (47%) of women indicated that they experienced expectations that they would eventually move on to serve as a lead pastor.

that they spent an hour or so each week to discuss the ministry of the congregation either often or sometimes, women were significantly more likely than men to develop this sort of collaborative working relationship; although 74.6% of men reported that they often or sometimes spent this amount of time in conversation with the senior minister, a full 93.4% of women reported the same.

The most frequent change desired by associate pastors was more feedback, collaboration, and communication with the senior minister. For example, 40% of the associate pastors reported that the senior minister "often" or "sometimes" did not give sufficient feedback and when asked to respond to an open-ended question about how their colleague could "support you or work with you more helpfully," the following comments are illustrations of the most frequent types of responses provided by the men and women in this sample:

> *Silence was affirmation. I would have liked more constructive positive critique and feedback.*
>
> *It would be helpful to have more regular face-to-face communication. More formal feedback on a periodic basis would have been helpful.*

Women and Men Co-Pastoring with Spouses

Of those who responded to the current survey, 43 women and 10 men had at one time or another served as a co-pastor with their spouse for an average of 10.8 years with a range of 1-51 years. The average number of years that the survey respondents had been married before beginning co-pastoring was 15.4 years with a range of 2 months to 40 years.

While the majority of women (64.1%) believed that the congregation was more interested in their spouse when the marital team was called, 40% of men also reported this same belief.[13] In 1992, only 41% of women respondents felt that the congregation was more interested in their spouse.

Even more troubling is the fact that 69% of the women serving as co-pastors with their spouses report that the congregation would not have called them if not for spouse; only 12% of men said the same thing. This gender difference is a significant one. This does represent, however, a slight improvement since 1992 when 76% of women serving as co-pastors reported that the congregation would not have called them without their spouse.

The majority of both men (88.9%) and women (67.4%) consider their ministerial role to be on an equal level with their spouse's role and receive equal salary checks and fringe benefits (74% of women and 62.5% of men). Of those who did not see their role as equal to their spouse, 27.9% of women described themselves as in a subordinate role and 4.7% saw themselves as

[13] Given the small size of this sub-sample (respondents co-pastoring with their spouses), one can not be sure that the magnitude of this gender difference is not simply due to sampling error.

being in a superordinate role; 11% of the men saw themselves as being in a superordinate level and none reported that they were in the subordinate role. In 1992, 66% of women saw their ministry as on an equal level and 34% viewed their ministry as subordinate, and so there appears to be a slight improvement in women's situations in this area.

Seven percent of the women respondents serving as co-pastors with their spouses report that there are pastoral roles in which the congregation would not allow them to perform. This was not true of any of the men who served as co-pastors.[14] In each of these cases, the role not permitted to women ministers was regular preaching. Although the majority of women do not report that the congregation limits the amount which they preach, the majority of co-pastoring arrangements appear to involve the husband preaching more than the wife. Of the respondents who provided information regarding the division of responsibility between spouses[15], 68% (24 of 35 respondents) indicated that the husband preaches more than the wife. In 17% of the cases, preaching responsibilities were divided equally and in 14% of the cases, the wife preaches more.

In summary, the majority of co-pastorates appear to provide settings where men and women serve together in an equal partnership, but a sizeable minority still involve a subordinate role for the female member of the couple. This inequality seems at least partially attributable to the expectations and policies of the congregations that these couples serve.

Comparisons of Job Satisfaction Levels

Survey respondents served in various roles in the church including sole or lead pastors, associate pastors, co-pastors with a spouse, co-pastors with person(s) other than a spouse, etc. The majority of individuals in each of these roles indicated that they were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their pastoral role in the congregation, however comparisons of the satisfaction ratings of individuals in these five different positions[16] revealed some small differences in satisfaction. The following table provides the percentages of persons in each of the roles who indicated various levels of satisfaction.

	# of respondents	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Mixed[17]	Dissat-isfied	Very Dissatisfied
Lead/Sole	78	44.9%	38.5%	16.7%		
Associate	26	34.6%	34.6%	30.8%		
Copastor with spouse	25	56%	20%	20%		4%
Copastor w/ other	18	61.1%	33.3%	5.6%		

[14] Although this question was also included in the survey in 1992, data regarding this question is unfortunately not included in the results.

[15] Specific information regarding the division of preaching responsibilities was provided by 35 of the 53 respondents who had served in co-pastorates. A number of responses indicated that responsibilities were divided based on gifts and preferences of the spouses without providing further specifics.

[16] The question regarding current roles on the survey unfortunately did not differentiate between those serving as sole pastors and those serving in lead pastorates, and so these two categories are combined together in this and other analyses in this report.

[17] The mixed rating was described on the survey as "both satisfied and frustrated."

As one can see from the table, of the four different roles, the highest average levels of satisfaction were reported by those serving as copastors with individual(s) other than their spouses. The highest average levels of dissatisfaction (or mixed satisfaction/frustration) were reported by those serving in associate roles.[18] [19]

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Statistical tests indicate that any differences in satisfaction levels between those serving in an associate roles and lead pastoral roles and between those copastoring with a spouse and those copastoring with person(s) other than their spouse are small enough that they may simply be due to chance.

Part-time vs. full-time ministry

Compared to the 1992 sample, there is a significant increase in the number of women respondents who are employed full time rather than half-time or less, but there are still significant gender differences in this regard.

	Women in Current Sample	**Men in Current Sample**	**Women in '92 sample**
Full-time	37%	62%	26%
3 / 4 time	19	14	12
Half-time	31	14	37
Less than half-time	13	11	25

In terms of gender comparisons, more men (61.7%) reported working full time than did women (37.2%); statistical analyses suggest that this is a significant difference.

The most frequently given reason given by both women and men who worked part time was financial constraints (or size) of the congregation. (This was even more so for the men among whom 51.5% gave this reason compared to 38.7% of the women.) For example, one respondent wrote:

> *The congregation is a revitalization/church plant so is small and growing. The mission board committed themselves to supporting the church for five years but did not support financially after three years. Because of decreased support from the district and mission board, our financial support is on ¼ time divided between us.*

[18] Again it is important to realize that although there were higher numbers of persons in associate roles who expressed that they felt mixed satisfaction and frustration, the majority of those currently serving in associate roles (69%) described themselves as either very satisfied or satisfied with their pastoral role in the congregation

[19] This pattern holds true for both male and female respondents with one exception: for the male respondents, half of the small number of male respondents who were serving as copastors with their spouses reported either that they felt some mixed level of frustration or that they were very dissatisfied with their role in the congregation. The other half of the men serving in copastoring roles were very satisfied.

Some indicated that this was a mutually agreeable arrangement for reasons discussed below. For others, this may not be the case. For example, a few explicitly commented that the part-time position was the only one available and others noted that they often worked more hours than those for which they were paid as illustrated by the following quotes.

> *My husband and I share one full-time position. We definitely work more than ½ each! The congregation can't really afford more and we feel called to be here for now – but it is a financial stretch and we would like more compensation down the road.*
>
> *[My husband] and I are each paid for ¼ time. We each work about 30 hours a week for the church or each ¾ time. This is what the church feels it can afford at this time.*

Of the women who work part-time, a substantial percentage (41.3%) explicitly noted that it was their choice to do so. The reasons women gave for this choice included working as a copastor (often with a spouse) or as part of a pastoral team, needing time for parenting or other family responsibilities, and the flexibility that this allows to be engaged in other activities. Some illustrative comments include:

> *I am still in seminary and prefer to work half-time. I am also committed to team ministry and grateful that this congregation is willing to hire two half-time pastors.*
>
> *Three young kids. I am trying to model for the congregation a lifestyle that is not crowded; too busy, in an urban area where that is the life most lead. Whether or not I am successful is another question.*
>
> *Recently asked to go to ¼ to do other ministries in community.*

In contrast, only 9% of the men explicitly noted that their part-time status was their own choice. This small number of men often gave reasons similar to those given by the women, for example:

"*Size of congregation plus also a personal preference. Because I have to punch a time card one day week. I am able to keep in touch with those who do."*

However, although 20% of the women indicated that at least one reason for their working part-time were family responsibilities, none of the male respondents gave this reason.

Bi-Vocational Pastors

Approximately one-third of pastors (34.6%) also have some paid work outside the congregation. The largest number of these (29.5%) work less than 10 hours weekly outside the congregation. An additional 26.2% work 10-20 hours. Only 8.2% of those who have paid work outside the congregation work 40 hours or more in their outside job. Pastors work in a wide variety of other positions. The most frequent types of occupations (in order of frequency reported) were: (1) teaching at various levels including seminary courses, (2)

chaplaincy/counseling/spiritual direction, (3) self-employment in jobs such as farming, carpentry, construction, etc., and (4) writing/editing.

Experiences of Call

There was a tendency for women to be older than men when they first considered a career in ministry. However, for both men and women, there was quite a range of experiences in this regard. The average age at which women considered a call was 29 years old whereas the average age at which men considered ministry was 21 years of age. The youngest age at which a male respondent reported considering a career in ministry was three years of age; for women, the youngest age reported was five. Similarly, the oldest age at which female respondents reported considering ministry as a career was 60 whereas for men, it was 57. One out of every ten women and one out every four men considered ministry at age 15 or earlier. Ten percent of women were 46 years or older when they considered ministry whereas 99% of male respondents reported that they had considered ministry as a career by the age of 40.

Women are also more likely both to decide to enter seminary and to actually enter seminary at an older age than are men. Only 18% of women respondents had decided to enter seminary by the end of college as compared to 41% of male respondents. The average age at which female respondents entered seminary was 33 years whereas men on average entered seminary at age 28.

A high percentage of both women (88%) and men (84%) described their inner call as "quite important" (the highest rating available on the survey) in their decision to pursue the ministry as a career. The influence of friends or congregational members, family members and the minister(s) of the church they attended were also rated as important influences on survey respondents' decisions to enter the ministry. Seminary faculty, conference ministers, and college faculty and staff were somewhat less important influences. Women pastors were rated as "quite important" by 29.7% of female respondents and 36.4% of the men.

When asked to briefly describe their journey into ministry, women frequently mentioned the role of education, encouragement from others (such as one's spouse, congregational members or a pastor), experiences of taking on leadership roles in the congregation, and an internal sense of call in facilitating their journeys into ministry. Approximately one-third of female respondents included a discussion of the hindrances that they experienced in their journeys into ministry. The most frequently articulated hindrance was discouragement from others due to their gender. A good number of women also described questions about how they would handle parenting of their children if they pursued a call to ministry, and some waited until their children were a certain age before they pursued their call.

Doubts

In her report on the survey of women pastors in 1992, Renee Sauder noted that women experienced a great deal of inner ambivalence regarding their call to ministry.[20] No quantitative data regarding women's doubts regarding entering pastoral ministry were included in the 1992 survey, but women pastors' descriptions of their journeys into ministry suggested that "…despite

[20] Sauder, Renee (1995). Inner Call/Inner Ambivalence : Conflicting Messages in a Fragile Conversation. In John B. Esau (Ed.), *Understanding Ministerial Leadership* (pp. 47-56). Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies.

the strong sense of inner call that brought women into ministry, women were surprised at discovering their giftedness and adequacy for ministry. Beneath the surface was a deeply acculturated sense of inadequacy that left them open to self-doubt regarding their rightful place in ministry and their ability to value the contributions they made as ministering persons (p.48)."

Since the 1992 survey did not survey male pastors, it did not gather data that could answer the question of whether women's doubts were quantitatively or qualitatively different from the doubts experienced by those experienced by men. The inclusion of a sample of males in the current survey provided an opportunity to remedy this problem.

For the current survey, male and female pastors were asked to rate how strong their doubts regarding entering pastoral ministry were on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 (not strong at all; only passing fears") to 5 ("very strong—almost led me not to pursue ministry"). The most frequent answer given by both men and women was "3." Statistical analysis suggests that there are no gender differences between women and men's ratings of the strength of their own experiences of doubt.

In addition to asking for a rating of doubts, the survey also asked for a narrative description of any doubts the respondents had regarding entering pastoral ministry. The most frequent type of doubt reported by both men and women involved questions regarding their abilities to carry out the pastoral role. For example, a female pastor described her

"feeling of being overwhelmed with the responsibility the awesomeness of this calling. Questioning my ability to fulfill tasks and expectations."

Sometimes these doubts related to particular roles. For example, a male respondent described his doubts in this way:

"I struggled with knowing if I had the gifts. Could I preach? Could I offer care to a grieving family?"

Preaching was the role most frequently mentioned in this regard. One woman wrote that she was not confident about her preaching but saw pastoring as defined primarily by that gift. Pastoral care was the second most frequently mentioned specific ability which prompted respondent's doubts.

Although there were many similarities in the doubts experienced by men and women, there were some differences. Women were much more likely than men were to describe external influences as the source of their doubts. For example, women wrote:

> *I had many doubts. With family, friends, and church uncomfortable with this was I hearing God right? Was I made wrong? Did I have the wrong gifts for a woman?*

> *If there were persons who questioned my call from God or my abilities I would struggle with whether that was God's way of leading me to NOT accept a call.*

I wondered if I would be accepted or if I would find employment to adequately meet my needs.

Over one-quarter of the women (28%) described some external source of doubts. Some of the external doubts were explicitly related to being a woman, but this was not explicitly stated in all of the cases. Only a few of the male pastors (four to be exact, i.e., only 3% of respondents) described external sources of doubts such as uncertainty about a church accepting them. The few men who voiced external influences on doubts reported similar situations to those reported by women such as uncertainty about a church accepting them ("*Would a church want me to be their pastor?")* or family resistance ("*Desires of my spouse*"). It should be noted, however, that no male respondents mentioned experiencing doubts that were explicitly related to their gender.

Male pastors were also twice as likely as women (18% of the men compared to 9% of the women) to report that they hadn't experienced any doubt. Men and women were equally likely to express a sense of confidence or reassurance in the face of initial doubts; Women: 24.3%; Men 24.8%).

Some of the doubts experienced by both men and women resulted from their observations of the church and the experiences of other pastors. This was reported by approximately 10% of both men and women. Some examples of this sort of response include:

After watching some of my female friends in ministry be devoured by their congregations, bones sucked dry and cast aside, I chose a "safer" route – the pastoral counseling route…

Yes. The pastors I knew at the time suffered financially, and their lives seemed to be "out of balance".

Did I want to be a leader in the church (which I saw had so many faults!)?

Yes, I worried about being able to handle conflict in ministry and whether our family could handle the pressures of ministry and the horror stories I'd heard of.

It's a risky job- would I get hurt? As a Mennonite minister you don't have much protection, compared to a more hierarchically organized denomination

Right up until I entered ministry I continued to have experiences in worship and other church activities that caused me to wonder what the point was, why do we gather?

Something seemed wrong about what we were doing; did I really want to leading part of this system?

I was not sure I wanted to be a pastor in a congregation given the difficulties I saw my husband facing as pastor (mainly relating to strong personality types and high expectations of a pastor).

Yes, I'd been close to pastors who'd been mistreated by their congregations. I'd been volunteering for my church and everyone was appreciative instead of looking at me as their employee, I preferred to keep it that way.

I didn't want to be crucified like other pastors.

It felt like I was working for 600 bosses instead of congregation members! Struggled with trying to please everyone. Did I really want my life to be constantly scrutinized with a microscope?

I wasn't sure about the institutionalism of the church and the "office" of pastor. I was concerned about just "playing the role" of pastor and wondered if I could be authentically myself in that role.

When I was an early teen my dad was asked to resign as pastor in a struggling church. I knew it was hurtful and he found growth outside the church. Theologically I went through a phase doubting the biblical validity of single pastor model. Why be part of something that I don't agree with. The church we were part of as young adults went through a big falling apart. People were disillusioned, hurt. Me too. Where was God! A faith crisis.

There were a few areas where a larger percentage of men reported doubts as compared to women, namely doubts related to financial concerns, for example:

"*I also thought I needed another vocation to support myself because all the ministers I knew were poor*"

"*How would I survive financially?"* (reported by 5.4% of men vs one woman or 0.6% of female respondents) and doubts related to doctrinal issues (reported by four men or 3.1% of the male respondents and three women or 1.8% of the women). There were a variety of doctrinal issues identified, for example:

Are my views (of welcome) too open to be a Mennonite pastor?

I originally thought I might be too liberal for the Mennonite church but found urban churches were able to use my gifts.

Should I pastor a Mennonite church? I have a charismatic bent.

Am I going to please God, or man? When I would teach or preach about the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit and Jesus the same yesterday and today, they would say you aren't preaching Mennonite Doctrine.

In their response to this question, some respondents indicated that their doubts came later (rather than before entering ministry) For example, one respondent wrote:

"*I had many more doubts about whether ministry was a good fit for me after I was in ministry for 7 years. This had to do with the feedback from the congregation I was serving."*

This theme showed up in the answers of 4 women and 4 men. Others may have experienced the same thing, but not reported on it since this wasn't explicitly asked for in the question. Denominational and conference staff will want to be aware that issues of call may need to be dealt with in an ongoing way by pastors. This is especially important as the majority of persons who reported that their doubts came later rated their doubts as "very strong" on a five-point Likert scale where "1" indicated that the doubts were "not strong at all; only passing fears" and a "5" indicated that the doubts were "very strong; almost led me not to pursue ministry."

Generational Differences in reports of Doubts

It's also interesting to examine the ways that generational issues may influence the experience of doubt or at least the reporting of doubt. The younger the respondent was, the less likely they were to report that they had no doubts regarding their call. The most frequent answer given by respondents 60 years of age or older is that they had experienced no doubt. In contrast, those in their 20's through 50's were most likely to report doubt regarding one's ability to do the job (e.g., doubts about their capabilities, education, personality, etc.) It may be that this is related to how one recalls one's call experience; perhaps as time passes, one is less likely to recall one's past experiences of doubt. Another possibility is that the church's standards and expectations regarding the acceptability of doubt have changed.

It is also interesting to note that respondents in their 20's were more likely than any other age group to report that they experienced doubt as the result of negative observations of the experiences of other pastors or of the church. As compared to 10% of the respondents in the entire sample, 22% of respondents in their 20's (in other words, close to one in five) identified this factor as a contributor to their doubts regarding entering the ministry. This reality might bear watching as it could potentially be an indicator of a problematic shift in perceptions of a career in ministry.

The Strongest Doubts

Lastly, it is interesting to examine which of the various sources of doubt were associated with the strongest doubts. As noted earlier, the survey asked respondents to rate the strength of their doubts on a five-point Likert scale where "1" indicated that the doubts were "not strong at all; only passing fears" and a "5" indicated that the doubts were "very strong; almost led me not to pursue ministry." As was true of most of the sample, the most frequently reported source of doubt among those who rated their doubt as very strong (a "5") were doubts about one's ability to do the job. Tying for the second most frequently provided response by those who rated their doubts as very strong were external call issues and negative observations of other pastors or of the church.

Sources of Sustenance for those in Ministry

Sources of Inner Strength and Priestly Authority

Survey respondents were asked to respond to an open-ended question regarding what they have found to provide "the most inner strength and priestly authority." Male and female respondents responded in remarkably similar ways to this question. Various types of spiritual disciplines such as prayer, the study of Scripture, spiritual direction, and journaling were the most frequent response given by both men and women (approximately 42% of the men and 52% of the women responding to the survey included this theme in their response to this question). The second most frequently mentioned source of strength and authority was affirmation or support by others such as the congregation, the elders, co-pastors, and spouse, family and friends. The third and fourth most frequently mentioned sources of inner strength and authority were (3) a sense of God's care and leading and God's Spirit at work in the individual's ministry and (4) the strength and authority that come from carrying out the role of minister and the office itself.

A good number of women (17%) also mentioned the way that their sense of call gave them inner strength. This theme was also mentioned by men but somewhat less frequently (9%). Other sources of inner strength and authority mentioned by fewer than 10% of men and women included:

- credentials/education
- experience/time/wisdom
- a sense of one's own personal integrity
- theological support for one's ministry
- working at boundaries and balance between work and one's personal life
- Jesus' treatment of women
- a commitment to a simple lifestyle

Conference Minister Support/Advocacy

The extent to which men and women pastors see conference ministers as supporting women in ministerial roles was discussed earlier in the report. The survey also asked both male and female respondents to rate how supportive they had found their conference ministers to be in three different areas: professional or ministerial career concerns, problems with/in the congregation, and personal matters.

The majority of both male and female pastors (75.5%) feel that they have adequate information about church related vacancies in which they might be interested and rate their conference ministers as either "quite helpful" or "somewhat helpful" with regard to career concerns and congregational problems. With regard to professional concerns, women were more likely to give higher ratings to their conference ministers than were men (although "quite helpful" was still the most common rating for both genders). The opposite was true with regard to problems with/in the congregation, with more men than women giving "quite helpful" ratings to their conference ministers in this area, and more women than men saying that they had not asked for or needed help. With regard to personal matters, the majority of men (63.7%) saw their conference ministers as "quite helpful" or "somewhat helpful" whereas this was true for

less than half the women (48%). A large number of women (40%) said that they had not asked for or needed help from their conference ministers regarding these sorts of issues.

Spiritual Direction

Women respondents to the survey were more likely than men to report that they meet with a spiritual director; only 37% of men do so whereas 54% of women do. There is a slight tendency for spiritual directors to be from denominations other than Mennonite (53%).

Contact with Other Clergypersons

A large majority (83%) of men and women serving as pastors (lead, associate or copastors) report that they are a member of a group of clergy who meet for support or study. Most of these (80%) are denominational specific groups. On average, these pastors meet with nine other clergypersons regularly (at least once a month). Women are more likely than men to meet with other women clergypersons (female average = 3.3; male average = 1.6). The majority of women (58%) are members of collegial, professional or interest groups composed of only women.

Congregational Feedback

Of the male and female respondents who are currently serving in lead, associate or copastor roles, 65% report that they have a committee within the congregation that meets regularly and functions as a pastoral relations/supervisory group, and the vast majority (92%) indicate that this committee is able to provide honest and realistic feedback. There were no significant gender differences in responses to these questions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following Bluffton University students provided a great deal of helpful assistance on the survey project: Carrie Cutlip, Celeste Yoder, Angela Streb, Oyeshiotineh Aliu, Devra Doan, Jenny Mierau, Jamie Shores, and Rochelle Stoltzfus.